NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE 2015: AN UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCE

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July 14, 2015

From London, this is the BBC World Service. Efforts by the People's Republic of China and the United States to mediate an end to the Indo-Pakistani War have succeeded. The cost of this latest conflict on the Indian sub-continent is beyond comprehension. For the first time in 70 years, nuclear weapons have been used in war. Bombay, Delhi, and Islamabad are wastelands. Casualties are estimated at 10-15 million people and the injured are overwhelming the limited medical facilities. Millions more are fleeing the nuclear nightmare. What prompted this devastation is unknown. Analysts point to a number of causal factors including lack of nuclear safeguards, the transfer of sensitive missile technology, and a rise in militant religious-based nationalism in both Pakistan and India. A growing number of respected analysts point to the American decision 14 years ago to deploy a national missile defense system. Many are now questioning that decision.

Two of the most enduring vital national interests are the protection of U.S. citizens and our territory. Driven by these interests, the United States began testing a limited national missile defense system intended to protect the country from missile attacks by "rogue" states. By the summer of 2000, missile testing for the national missile defense (NMD) proved inconclusive. This forced President Clinton to defer the

deployment decision to the next administration. Given the wide political support for the defense system, however, the president authorized further missile tests.

In an example of "all politics is local", debate in the United States centered on our technological superiority and the ability to fund the system. Little consideration was given to international consequences beyond the restrictive provisions of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. In many quarters, the treaty was viewed as an anachronism of the Cold War when the superpower arms race was out of control. Faced with the fact that the United States would abrogate the treaty unilaterally, Russia reluctantly agreed to amend it.

The American campaign to develop a protective shield against ballistic nuclear missiles provoked serious concern among our European allies. They contended that NMD would prompt an arms race with China and Russia and weaken the political and military links between the United States and Europe. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer stated: "There is no doubt that this would lead to split security standards within the NATO alliance." He believed Germany's commitment to be non-nuclear "was always based on our trust that the United States would protect our interests, that the United States, as the leading nuclear power, would guaranteed some sort of order."[1] "Congressional moves to break out of multilateral nuclear arms control are making the world more unsafe without making the United States any safer," a French official said.[2] Even British Prime Minister Tony Blair is said to harbor serious reservations about the

[1] William Drozdiak, "Possible U.S. Missile Shield Alarms Europe," *Washington Post*, November 6, 1999, A1.
[2] Joseph Fitchett, "Chinese Nuclear Buildup Predicted," *International Herald Tribune*, November 6-7, 1999, 1.

U.S. plans for ballistic missile defense.[3] These concerns were largely ignored. More ominously, China's warnings against NMD went unheeded.

Chinese policymakers claim U.S. interest in NMD could destabilize an already delicate balance of power in the region and force Beijing to reevaluate its own military needs. They viewed the deployment of 100 interceptors as far greater than necessary to deter the limited threat posed by a "rogue" state – most notably, North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. They concluded that NMD was, instead, directed at China and would effectively neutralize their small strategic nuclear force. Ambassador Sha Zukang, China's top arms control official, has asserted that U.S. deployment of NMD will inevitably force China to increase the size of its long-range missile forces. In a speech to an international nonproliferation conference at the Carnegie Endowment last January, Ambassador Sha remarked that "if a country, in addition to its offensive power, seeks to develop NMD, in an attempt to attain absolute security and unilateral strategic advantage for itself, other countries will be forced to develop more advanced missiles."[4] Western analysts concluded China would, in addition to deploying greater numbers of ICBMs, develop a system that could penetrate a missile shield – decoys, shrouded warheads, and, perhaps, multiple warheads.

Late 2000 and early 2001 witnessed a series of spectacularly successful anti-ballistic missile intercepts. Having campaigned on a platform supporting NMD, the new president authorized the deployment of 100 interceptors in Alaska and upgrades to the early warning X-band radar.

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[3] Drozdiak. "Possible U.S. Missile Shield Alarms Europe," 1.
[4] Jack Mendelsohn, "Missile Defense: And It Still Doesn't Work," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Chicago. May/Jun 1999, 29.

The Chinese reaction was predictable. They immediately embarked on a program of strategic force modernization intent on defeating NMD. While one of Deng Xiaoping's "four modernizations" was military improvement, it had been limited to conventional forces designed to improve Chinese capability vis-à-vis Taiwan. Their strategic force had gone largely untouched for over 35 years. Estimates of China's nuclear capability vary widely. It is believed that China has upwards of 400 nuclear devices and between 11 and 50 early generation ICBMs. In an unusually candid interview, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongzhi stated: "China will retain its no first use policy; however, we will take action to maintain the credibility of our strategic forces. We view the U.S. deployment of a national missile defense as inherently destabilizing. Our goal is simple: modernize our strategic assets to ensure it can defeat NMD and restore the balance we deem critical to China's survival."

By 2006, China deployed 75 advanced ICBMs. Moderate elements in the foreign ministry that favored China's adoption of the missile technology control regime (MTCR) were overwhelmed by hard-liners in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Chinese Communist Party. Intelligence sources revealed China had obtained sophisticated decoys and maneuverable re-entry devices, probably from cash strapped Russia. In addition, China conducted a successful submarine launched ICBM test. These missiles were subsequently deployed on four newly commissioned ballistic missile submarines.

India watched these unfolding events with apprehension and great suspicion. Two adversaries – China and Pakistan, flank India. They have gone to war with both of these nations and many of the underlying causes of tension between each have not been

resolved. Further, India is concerned that if it lacked a credible nuclear response, it would, at some point, be susceptible to Chinese nuclear blackmail.[5] India's Prime Minister and leader of the Hindu Nationalist Party stated: "India's independence in world affairs demand we maintain a credible nuclear force."

U.S. policymakers watched these developments in Asia with trepidation. The new entrants in the nuclear club – India and Pakistan – elaborated primitive forces and so-called deterrent policies without the benefit of the intricate and costly warning and control measures essential to any hope for crisis stability. Efforts to slow the arms race between China and India were rebuffed. China insisted that its strategic force modernization was necessitated by the American deployment of NMD. "China", a senior PLA spokesman said, "has no dispute with India." India, on the other hand, chaffed under its lack of recognition as a nuclear power and U.S.-led efforts to deny them a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. At a press conference after meetings with the U.S. presidential envoy, the Indian foreign minister termed the United States a "land of hypocrites. It fails to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and it maintains the largest, most sophisticated nuclear arsenal in the world. If their goal was the influence India's internal policies vis-à-vis our strategic forces, then these meetings were an abject failure."

Borrowing from western concepts, Pakistani analysts describe nuclear weapons as the "great equalizer" offsetting India's conventional superiority and making deterrence affordable to Pakistan. Prior to the Indian build-up, General Mirza Aslam Beg believed there was "a correct equilibrium between the countries. Far from talk of nuclear war,

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[5] Gregory F. Giles and James E. Doyle. "Indian and Pakistani Views on Nuclear Deterrence," *Comparative*

there [was] no danger of even conventional war between India and Pakistan."[6] Increasingly isolated from the world community and in response to Indian moves, the military government decided to settle the Kashmir issue before India gained a decisive advantage. India and Pakistan have confronted each other militarily in divided Kashmir since the Indian sub-continent was partitioned. Pakistan's plan, code named the Sword of God, included an elaborate use of para-military terrorist actions in Indian occupied Kashmir followed by lightening special forces strikes against Indian positions during the winter lull in fighting.

Between 2010 and 2013, a series of terrorists attacks in Kashmir claimed the lives of over 1,500 people. While evidence suggested these attacks were the actions of Sikh separatists, the India popular press fanned the flames of nationalism and blamed Pakistan. Pakistan repeatedly denied responsibility and offered to participate in international mediation to settle the Kashmir issue. The Indian government came under increasing domestic pressure to confront Pakistan militarily. United Nations, U.S. and European efforts to defuse the situation failed.

In the winter of 2014, Pakistan launched a surprise attack against the Indian mountain positions. Elite Pakistani forces, operating in arduous conditions, overwhelmed the Indian Army and inflicted severe casualties among the Indian defenders. Within weeks, Pakistan controlled the majority of the disputed state. Public opinion in India bordered on outrage. Large public demonstrations forced the government action to regain the lost territory. The Pakistanis, however, quickly consolidated their defensive positions and poured reinforcements into the area. They

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Strategy, vol. 15, no. 2 (Apr 1996): 137.

successfully rebuffed the ill-conceived Indian attempts to regain the lost territory. World concern over armed conflict between two nuclear powers lacking adequate safeguards prompted renewed attempts to mediate the situation. Pakistan, having achieved the majority of their objectives, quickly agreed to mediation in any forum. Further, they announced a unilateral cease-fire. Pakistan's military leader, General Akim Sharif stated that "we have suspended offensive operations and will only take action if attacked. Pakistan fully supports the international community's call for mediation and calls on India to accede to the dictates of world opinion."

Opposition leaders and massive public demonstrations gave the Indian government no quarter for mediation. In January 2015, the Prime Minister authorized Plan Kali (the Hindu god of evil). Intended to avoid the mountainous terrain of Kashmir, Kali was designed to take advantage of India's overwhelming conventional superiority by launching massive armor attacks across the Punjab. By March 2015, India successfully isolated Karachi and their columns were driving toward Islamabad. Pakistani losses both military and civilian were appalling. By early June, the Indian Army was within artillery range of the capital. Yet, General Sharif resisted the use of nuclear weapons. The intrepid presidential envoy, Ambassador Dave Robinson, in conjunction with Chinese envoy, Zing Doa, undertook the thankless task of negotiating a cease-fire. While the envoys were in Islamabad, General Sharif was overthrown and replaced with an Islamic extremist junta of junior officers. The junta immediately threatened the use of nuclear weapons to stem the Indian offensive. Both ambassadors were recalled for consultation.

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[6] Giles and Doyle. "Indian and Pakistani Views on Nuclear Deterrence," 146.

Indian military efforts now centered on capturing the Pakistani nuclear force. Sensing the loss of their strategic force, the junta authorized nuclear strikes. Four weapons were launched. For the first time in 70 years, the world witnessed the horror of nuclear weaponry. Three of the weapons detonated – two in Delhi and one in Bombay. The interim Indian government immediately launched a counter-strike. By mid-August, the death toll exceeded 15 million people and overwhelmed the two country's ability to cope with the carnage. In return for international assistance, the U.S.-Chinese mediation team negotiated a return to the pre-war international border, the establishment of a UN protectorate in Kashmir, and nuclear disarmament in both India and Pakistan. Given the scope of human suffering, however, it was a Pyrrhic victory for diplomacy.

October 22, 2015

From the CNN Center in Atlanta. Government agencies are struggling to contain an epidemic outbreak of smallpox in three major American cities. Large sections of New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. are quarantined. Over 600,000 people have contracted the deadly disease and, while government officials are reluctant to discuss the death toll, estimates are that over 75,000 people have died. Research specialists at Atlanta's Center for Disease Control suggest this smallpox strain was genetically engineered to resist treatment. A senior government spokesman believes this was a coordinated attack against the United States. Intelligence sources, however, have no leads. To date, no one has claimed responsibility.

An implausible scenario? Perhaps, but it supports two salient points. First, the United States as the world's sole superpower, with declared global interests, has a responsibility for the consequences of its actions. Internationally, the deployment of NMD could result in an arms race between China and India leading to a nuclear exchange and the related human tragedy in southern Asia. It could lead to a reassessment of U.S. intent by our allies in Europe and northeast Asia leading ultimately to the rearmament of Germany and Japan. It could also lead to a lessening of Sino-American

cooperation on the Korean peninsula. Perhaps the most disconcerting aspect of the deployment of NMD is that it might prompt the proliferation of missile and nuclear technology it was intended to deter. None of these potential outcomes are in the American interest. This is not to suggest that China or any other nation dictate U.S. foreign policy. Rather, policymakers have an obligation to explore all potential results of their decisions. For a superpower with global leadership responsibilities "all politics is *not* local."

Second, the scenario illustrates the range of asymmetrical threats arrayed against the United States. We have, and will not have through 2015, an adversary willing to confront our overwhelming superiority in a conventional set piece battle. The lessons of the Gulf War and Operation Allied Force drove this point home. Whether easily obtained WMD, particularly biological agents, information warfare, or orchestrated acts of terrorism, NMD would do little to deter a determined adversary. In addition, our Constitutional freedoms, open society, and porous borders heighten our vulnerability. NMD would give the American people a false sense of security. Potential adversaries with overt missile and WMD programs are intended to influence American actions or gain a negotiating advantage. For example, the North Korean test firing of a ballistic missile over Japan ultimately led to a light water reactor program, food aid, and an easing of U.S. sanctions against the regime in return for a suspension of the North Korean missile and nuclear programs. This solution is far better than the programs we don't know about. The unknown is the real danger to the United States.

The alternative to NMD requires an overarching political framework to deter potential attacks against our vital interests. The United States should ratify the

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty immediate and strengthen the Missile Technology Control Regime. Further, with the Duma's recent ratification of START II, the U.S. should begin negotiations on START III and, if necessary, take unilateral action to reduce strategic forces to those levels. These actions will signal America's intention to reduce global tensions and ease the proliferation of missile and WMD technologies. In conjunction with these actions and most importantly vis-à-vis the protection of vital U.S. interests, the president must clearly state that an attack against the United States, it's citizens, or allies will result in a regime change. Nations harboring groups initiating actions from within their borders will be held responsible. The United States should also retain the pre-emptive strike option. This should, however, be used judiciously. A pre-emptive strike is a short-term solution that does not address the transfer of sensitive technology. Additionally, world opinion would be galvanized against the United States in the absence of conclusive intelligence. Credibility is the key to this policy's deterrence effect. The United States needs a robust intelligence service, a lethal military, and the political will to combat this threat.

Sun Tzu proffered a perpetual state of war and the primacy of intelligence. While we are not at war in the classic sense, the combination of an asymmetric threat and our vulnerability demands a constant vigilance. The majority of the $12.8 billion in NMD deployment expenses should be dedicated to refining our intelligence against WMD producers and users both state and non-state actors. Contrary to Sun Tzu, intelligence is not omnipotent. Herein lies the greatest risk. On occasions, as in the smallpox example, the United States may be unable to act.

Militarily, this alternative integrates within the existing National Military Strategy (Shape, Respond, Prepare Now) and Joint Vision 2010. The Department of Defense would continue research and development toward NMD and space-based systems. Theater Missile Defense (TMD) would be produced. Based on intelligence, TMD could be deployed to protect allies, a threatened portion of the United States, or provide "full dimensional protection" for U.S. military actions. The armed forces can continue to shape the environment by increased military-to-military contacts emphasizing CINC peacetime engagement priorities of countering proliferation. In addition, military expertise should be offered to nuclear powers (declared and undeclared) to improve safeguards.

According to Joint Vision 2010, the primary purpose of America's armed forces is "to deter conflict."[7] Without peer, they deter through their preeminence in technology, training, leadership, and the ability to act in the joint arena. The U.S. military must maintain its technological superiority, the ability to project power, and lethality. In short, it must be feared. When called upon the U.S. military must "fight and win our nation's wars."[8]

National Missile Defense represents a political path of least resistance that fails to address the current threat environment. The decision to deploy NMD is an introspective one. It could have a deleterious effect on our allies and efforts to stem the spread of WMD. An alternative strategy requires the political will to accept increased risks and a concerted effort toward bipartisan support in order to balance our vital interests with enhanced global security.

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[7] Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Joint Vision 2010," U.S. Department of Defense, (1996): 4.

[8] ibid.

GLOSSARY

Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. The United States and the Soviet Union agreed that each side may only have two ABM deployment areas, so restricted and so located that they could not provide a nationwide ABM defense or become the basis for developing one. Each country thus leaves unchallenged the penetration capability of the others retaliatory missile forces. Precise quantitative and qualitative limits are imposed on the ABM systems that may be deployed. Both parties agreed to limit qualitative improvements of their ABM technology. The treaty was signed in Moscow on May 26, 1972 and entered into force on October 3, 1972. Five-year review meetings are held in Geneva. The next review conference is scheduled for 2003.

Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB) Treaty. The treaty prohibits all nuclear weapon test explosions or other nuclear explosions in the world. In order to verify compliance with its provisions, the treaty establishes a global network of monitoring facilities and allows on-site inspections of suspicious events. The treaty requires the signature of 44 states possessing nuclear power and/or research reactors – including the five nuclear states (United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, and China) and the three "threshold states" (India, Israel, and Pakistan). As of October 5, 1999, 154 states have signed and 51 states have ratified the treaty. Of the 44 states required to sign the treaty prior to formal entry into force, 41 have signed the treaty. The other three states are India, Pakistan, and North Korea.

Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The MTCR was formed in 1987 by the G-7 nations (United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan). It is a voluntary arrangement (not a binding treaty) consisting of common export policies applied to a list of missile delivery systems and related technologies for those systems capable of carrying a 500-kilogram payload at least 300 kilometers. The MTCR was originally concerned only with nuclear capable delivery systems. In January 1993, the partners extended the guidelines to cover WMD delivery systems. The MTCR considers "missiles" to include: ballistic missiles, space-launched vehicles, and sounding rockets. The MTCR now consists of 27 partner countries.

Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START). A series of agreements between the United States and Russia intended to reduce nuclear warheads and delivery systems.

START I. The treaty reduced deployed heavy bombers and deployed ballistic missiles to 1,600 for each side with a total of 6,000 warheads (4,900 on ballistic missiles, 1,540 on heavy missiles (SS-18), or 1,100 on mobile ICBMs). START I also placed limitations on bomber carried short-range attack missiles and air-launched cruise missiles. In addition, separate "politically binding" agreements limited sea-launched missiles with ranges above 600 kilometers to 880 for each side and the Backfire bomber to 500. START I entered into force in December 1994.

START II. By December 31, 2007, the United States and Russia are to deploy no more than 3,000 to 3,500 strategic nuclear weapons each on ICBMs, sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and heavy bombers. By December 31, 2003, the sides are to "deactivate" all strategic nuclear delivery vehicles to be eliminated by removing their reentry vehicles. In addition, both sides agreed to eliminate multiple warheads (MIRV) on land-based missiles, destroy all SS-18 heavy Russian missiles, and limit SLBMs to no more than 1,700 to 1,750. The Russian Duma ratified START II in April 2000.

START III. During the March 1997 summit meeting in Helsinki, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin agreed on the basic elements of START III. The treaty, coterminous with START II, will reduce strategic warheads to no more than 2,000 to 2,5000 each on ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers. The United States and Russia will negotiate measures relating to the transparency of warhead inventories and the destruction of strategic nuclear warheads. The two states will resolve issues related to the goal of making the current START treaties unlimited in duration.

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